

to point; in the tail being simple, or without any trace of fin, raised line, or keel, above; and lastly in the absence of any kind of tentacle behind the spiracles. In the second and last of these characters it approaches much more nearly the American *Pt. maclura*, Müll. und Henle, but differs in smoothness when adult, in colour, greater width of body, and in the tail being sharp-edged or fin-carinate beneath. From the Indian *Pt. micrura*, Müll. und Henle, it is abundantly distinct.

MISCELLANEOUS.

POPULAR TRADITIONS RELATIVE TO THE CUCKOO.

[WE know not what degree of relationship our readers may be disposed to admit between Natural History and the imaginations and traditions suggested to mankind in various ages and countries by natural objects. These will at least not be less amusing to the lover of Natural History than to the general reader; and may sometimes have a relation to supposed characters and qualities, and to the origin of those popular names which convey the same idea in a remarkable manner through various countries and languages.—R. T.]

To no bird is the gift of prophecy more commonly attributed than to the cuckoo, whose loud measured voice resounds in the woods just clad with fresh verdure.

The old German saying, “Wann der *gauch guket*,” denotes the beginning of the spring*, just as, according to Hesiod, the song of the cuckoo announces the time of the spring rains. Two old poems describe the contention of Spring and Winter about the cuckoo, and the lament of the herdsmen for him: the Spring praises, slow Winter—*tarda hiems*—reproaches the bird; the herdsmen represent him as taken away or drowned: the line is remarkable:—

Tempus adest veris, cuculus modo rumpe soporem†.

He announces by his song the loveliest season of the year, but it is not stated in these poems that he predicts to man. The Anglo-Saxon Codex Exoniensis, 146, 27, lately published by Mr. Thorpe, ascribes likewise to this bird the announcing of the year:—

geacas gear budon;
cuculi annum nuntiavere.

The popular belief still exists, that whoever hears the cry of the cuckoo for the first time in the spring, may ask him how many more years he has to live. In Switzerland the children cry “*Gugger*, wie lang lebi no?” In Lower Saxony,

“*Kukuk* vam häven
Wo lange sall ik leven?”

and then they listen and count; as many times as the bird cries

* Looking forward to the return of fine weather in spring, the Norfolk people say, “When the cuckoo has picked up the dirt.”—R. T.

† Both poems are ascribed to Bede in Dornavii Amphitheatrum.

after it is questioned, so many years has he who asks the question to live. In other places the saying is as follows:—

<i>Kukuk</i> , beckenknecht,	Cuckoo, baker-boy,
Sag mir recht,	Tell me true,
Wie viel jahr ich leben soll?	How many years shall I live?

The bird is said to be a bewitched baker- or miller-boy, and thus has pale or meal-coloured feathers. In a dear season he robbed poor folks of their dough, and when God blessed the dough in the oven, drew it out, plucked some off, and every time cried out as he did so, 'Gukuk!' (Look, look!) God therefore punished him, and turned him into a thievish bird, who continually repeats this cry. This legend, which is of great antiquity, and resembles that of the woodpecker, may at an earlier period have been otherwise told; and connected with it may be the notion that the cry of the cuckoo, if heard after St. John's day, betokens scarcity.

In Sweden he prophesies to unmarried lasses how many years they shall remain single.

Gök, Gök, sitt på quist, &c.

Cuckoo, cuckoo, that sits on a bough, &c.

If he cries oftener than ten times, they say that he sits upon a silly bough, and give no heed to his prophecies. Much depends upon the direction in which the cuckoo is first heard; if from the north (that is the unlucky side) you will have mourning during the year: from the east or west his cry portends good fortune.

In Gæthe's 'Frühlingsorakel' the prophetic bird announces to a pair of lovers their approaching marriage and the number of children.

It is remarkable enough that our poets of the thirteenth century do not mention the cuckoo as prophesying: the thing was doubtless commonly known, for we find in Renner, 11340,

Daz weiz der *gouch*, der im für wâr

Hât gegutzet hundert jâr.

And we have a story related by the abbot Theobald of a certain novice, who, assuring himself of living twenty-two years longer, from having heard the cuckoo repeat its cry just so many times, concluded that it was needless for him to pass so long a period in mortification, and resolved to return and lead a jolly life for twenty years, thinking the remaining two quite enough for penitence*.

From the regularity of the time of his appearance†, the cuckoo is

* "Narravit nobis anno præterito (? 1221) Theobaldus abbas Eberbancensis, quod quidam conversus, cum nescio quo tenderet, et avem quæ *cuculus* dicitur, a voce nomen habens, crebrius cantantem audiret, vices interruptionis numeravit, et viginti duas inveniens, easque quasi pro omine accipiens *pro annis* totidem vices easdem *sibi computavit*: 'Eja,' inquit, 'certe viginti duobus annis adhuc vivam; ut quid tanto tempore mortificem me in ordine? Redibo ad seculum, et seculo deditus viginti annis fruar deliciis ejus; duobus annis qui supersunt pœnitebo.'"—CÆSARIUS HEISTERBAC. 5. 17.

† [So Logan, in his beautiful lines on the Cuckoo:

Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?]

probably the bird designated *zítvogel* in an old proverb, in accordance with the passage of Pliny, "Cantus alitis *temporarii* quem cuculum vocant." It is said that he never cries before the 3rd of April, and never after the festival of St. John. But he cannot cry before he has devoured a bird's egg. If you have money in your purse when he first cries, all will go well during the year; and if you were fasting, you will be hungry the whole year. When the cuckoo has eaten his fill of cherries three times, he ceases to sing.

It portends misfortune to the Servian *haiduken* when the *kukavitza* appears early and comes out of the black wood, but good luck when his cry comes from the green wood.

The froth in the meadows caused by the *Cicada spumaria* is called Cuckoo-spittle; *Germ.* Kukuksspeichel; *Swiss*, Guggerspeu; *Dan.* Giögespyt; otherwise Hexenspeichel, Witches-spit; *Norw.* Troldkiäringspye; thus connecting the bird with supernatural beings. The names of some plants confirm its mythic character: *Oxalis acetosella*, *Old German*, Gouches-ampfera; *Swiss*, Guggersauer; *Anglo-Saxon*, Geaces-sure; *Scotch*, Goukemeat; *Swed.* Gökmat; *Dan.* Giogemad, Giogesyre (it was believed that the bird liked to eat these): *Modern German*, Kubkuksbrot; *Fr.* Pain de Coucou, *Panis cuculi*. Cuckoo-flower, *Lychnis Flos-cuculi*, *Germ.* Kukkuksblume.

The Slavonians do not attribute anything bad or devilish to this bird, which they always represent as a female. *Zezhulice*, sitting on an oak, bewails the transitoriness of spring. The Servian *kukavitza* was a maiden who long bewailed her brother's death, until she was changed into the bird, "Sinja *kukavitza*" (the gray): so also in Russian songs it is a bird of mourning and melancholy; and Russian traditions speak of her as a young maiden changed by an enchantress.

Some mountains are named after the Cuckoo; and Caucasus is said to be among the number.

From J. Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie*, vol. i. p. 640.

ORTYX VIRGINIANA IN NORFOLK.

As little appears known now as to what success attended the turning loose of some specimens of the *Ortyx virginiana* in Norfolk several years since, an extract from a letter addressed to me nineteen years ago by the Rev. John Burrell, F.L.S., Rector of Letheringsett, near Holt in Norfolk, may throw some light on that subject. I may premise that the above gentleman was a zealous naturalist of the old school and contemporary with Marsham, Sir J. E. Smith, Haworth, Lathbury, Skrimshire, Scales, &c. now no more, and member of the original Aurelian Society. Mr. Burrell established a natural-history correspondence amongst the cultivators of natural history in Norfolk and Norwich, by which each member was bound to transmit to him as the Focus or Registrar, on the first or second of each month, an account of captures, observations, *locus et tempus* in entomology, &c. for the past month, all of which letters he engaged to answer in a similar way on the thirteenth and fourteenth of the same month, and enter each and every one in a book provided for that purpose by himself, which book, if now in the possession of the family, would

be worth preserving as a literary curiosity and monument of his industry; as few men, perhaps no one, ever wrote *more* letters to his correspondents, who had so many public claims upon his time, family anxieties and bodily sufferings, as my late venerable and respected friend. The letter from which I quote is dated November 11th, 1825:—"I had yesterday a bird brought to my parlour which was shot here; it was given me as a new addition to the British Fauna; at first sight I thought it a quail, a bird I never saw. I examined it by Shaw's 'General Zoology,' and from some of the habits, which I have learnt from the sportsman since I received it, I am willing to accord in the nomenclature applied to it by the sportsman, the *Maryland Partridge* of Pennant's 'Arctic Zoology.' It is not, however, such a novelty as my neighbour conjectured; I have a specimen previously set up; it was brought to me last year, when I contented myself with a bird's-eye view, and joined other students in natural history in having hitherto confounded it with the quail. It is now quite a colonized creature, and numerous are the covies, which report says that the poachers cannot destroy, its manners are so watchful and shy of man. It was too much shot for preservation, and therefore I not once thought of sending it to Norwich. If your museum should deem it a desideratum, that is, if it has not a specimen, I have no doubt I can procure specimens for it, myself and other friends."

Whether the bird is scarce or not in the same neighbourhood now I cannot tell, having myself been absent nearly eighteen years from Norfolk.

Phil. Hall, Leeds, March 25, 1844.

HENRY DENNY.

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF VOLUTA.

VOLUTA RETICULATA. *Vol. testâ elongato-ovatâ, lævigatâ, pallidè fulvâ, fusco vel spadiceo-fusco per totam superficiem subtilissimè trigono-reticulatâ, reticulâ bifasciatim confusâ; anfractibus flammis brevibus spadiceis longitudinalibus, prominentibus, prope suturas vividè pictis; apertura fauce spadiceo-fuscâ.* Long. $3\frac{1}{2}$ in.; lat. $1\frac{1}{2}$.

Hab. Coast of New Holland, north of Swan River Settlement.

This beautiful new Volute somewhat resembles the *Voluta pallida* in form, and is of nearly the same ground tint of colour; here, however, the resemblance ceases, it being entirely covered with a fine brown net-work, with two broad bands formed by a rich amalgamation of the net-work. The most striking feature of the shell is in the upper part of the whorls being vividly ornamented with a close-set row of undulating flames of rich brown running down from the sutures, and the enamelled lining of the aperture is of the same uniform rich brown. Of the two specimens just imported in H.M.S. Beagle, one is in the collection of Thos. Norris, Esq., of Redvalves; the other in that of J. Dennison, Esq., of Woolton Hill. There is a bad specimen of this Volute in the British Museum, and another in the collection of William Metcalfe, Esq.—*Proc. Zool. Soc.* Nov. 28, 1843.

ON THE GENUS VENILIA.

To Richard Taylor, Esq.

Newcastle, 12th April, 1844.

DEAR SIR,—Having learnt from our friend Professor E. Forbes that the name of *Venilia*, given to a new genus of *Nudibranchiata* described by Mr. Hancock and myself in the ‘Annals of Natural History’ for March last, has been previously used for a genus of bivalve shells in Morton’s ‘Synopsis of the Chalk Fossils of the United States,’ we propose changing the name of our genus to *Proctonotus*, and shall feel obliged by your announcing the alteration in your next number.

I am, dear Sir, yours very truly,

JOSHUA ALDER.

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS FOR MARCH 1844.

Chiswick.—March 1. Cloudy and fine: rain at night. 2. Overcast: squally, with heavy showers. 3. Cloudy and windy: clear and fine. 4. Constant heavy rain throughout. 5. Cloudy: clear, with sharp frost at night. 6. Clear and frosty: overcast: slight frost. 7. Cloudy and cold. 8. Very fine. 9. Cloudy and mild. 10. Heavy rain. 11. Boisterous. 12. Very clear: stormy showers. 13. Clear: cloudy. 14. Heavy rain. 15. Rain: fine. 16. Slight haze: fine. 17. Overcast: boisterous. 18. Clear and cold. 19. Cloudy. 20. Rain. 21. Clear and fine. 22. Cloudy: rain at night. 23. Fine. 24. Cloudy: boisterous. 25. Overcast. 26. Very fine. 27. Overcast: hazy. 28. Very fine. 29. Dense fog. 30. Dry haze. 31. Slight haze: clear and fine: foggy at night.—Mean temperature of the month 0°·1 below the average.

Boston.—March 1, 2. Fine: rain early A.M. 3. Fine. 4. Fine: rain P.M. 5. Cloudy. 6. Fine: rain and snow P.M. 7. Cloudy. 8. Fine: rain P.M. 9. Cloudy. 10. Rain. 11. Windy: stormy day: rain P.M. 12. Windy: stormy day: rain and snow P.M. 13. Fine. 14, 15. Cloudy: rain A.M. 16, 17. Cloudy. 18. Fine. 19. Cloudy. 20. Rain. 21. Fine. 22. Cloudy. 23. Cloudy: rain early A.M. 24. Rain. 25. Cloudy: rain P.M. 26, 27. Cloudy. 28, 29. Fine. 30. Foggy. 31. Cloudy.

Sandwick Manse, Orkney.—March 1. Thaw: cloudy. 2. Rain: clear frost. 3. Cloudy: clear frost. 4. Snow-showers. 5. Snow: drift-showers. 6. Snow-showers: cloudy. 7. Bright: cloudy. 8. Rain: damp. 9. Rain: showers. 10. Bright: clear. 11. Showers: snow-showers. 12, 13. Snow-showers. 14. Bright: damp. 15. Bright: clear frost. 16, 17. Bright: cloudy. 18. Bright: damp. 19. Showers: rain. 20. Bright: cloudy. 21. Cloudy: rain. 22. Showers: clear. 23. Clear. 24. Bright: clear. 25. Drops: clear. 26. Clear: cloudy. 27. Bright: clear: aurora. 28. Clear: cloudy. 29. Clear: aurora. 30. Fine. 31. Mist: aurora.

Applegarth Manse, Dumfries-shire.—March 1. Heavy showers P.M. 2. Very slight rain. 3. Heavy rain. 4. Fair. 5. Slight shower: snow. 6. Frost A.M.: fine. 7. Frost. 8. Frost: snow: rain P.M. 9. Sharp showers: rain. 10. Clear A.M.: rain P.M. 11. Showers of sleet. 12. Frost: snow. 13. Frost: fine. 14. Rain P.M. 15. Sleet. 16. Frost: fair. 17. Frost: fine. 18. Frost: rain P.M. 19. Showery: sleet. 20. Frost: fine. 21. Rain: hail. 22. Fine. 23. Rain and hail. 24. Heavy rain. 25, 26. Fine. 27. Very fine: rain P.M. 28. Fine: frost. 29. Fine spring day. 30. Fine: frost. 31. Fine.

Mean temperature of the month	38°·8
Mean temperature of March 1843	40·7
Mean temperature of twenty years	38·9
Mean temperature of spring-water	45·0

Meteorological Observations made by Mr. Thompson at the Garden of the Horticultural Society at Chiswick, near London; by Mr. Veall, at Boston; by the Rev. W. Dunbar, at Applegarth Manse, Dumfries-shire; and by the Rev. C. Clouston, at Sandwick Manse, Orkney.

Days of Month.	Barometer.				Thermometer.				Wind.				Rain.									
	Chiswick.		Boston.		Dumfries-shire.		Orkney, Sandwick.		Chiswick.		Boston.		Dumfries-shire.		Orkney, Sandwick.		Boston.	Dumfries-shire.	Orkney, Sandwick.			
	Max.	Min.	8 a.m.	8 p.m.	Max.	Min.	8 a.m.	8 p.m.	Max.	Min.	9 a.m.	4 p.m.	Calm.	W.	SSW.	Orkney, Sandwick.						
1844. March.																						
1.	29.459	29.339	28.92	28.98	28.95	28.75	28.70	28.85	28.75	28.80	36	44	43	36	39½	36	calm	sw.	sw.	.04	.32	
2.	29.429	29.372	29.00	29.00	28.95	28.80	28.80	28.85	28.75	28.80	37	41	43	33½	37	35	w.	sw.	sw.	.04	.05	
3.	29.427	29.359	28.86	28.85	29.09	29.20	29.20	29.09	28.91	29.20	50	37	44	34	38	35½	w.	sw.	sw.	.20		
4.	29.513	29.357	29.03	29.30	29.59	29.60	29.60	29.50	29.50	29.60	41	28	38	40	33	32	calm	ne.	ne.	.48		
5.	29.806	29.762	29.45	29.70	29.65	29.68	29.68	29.65	29.60	29.68	43	19	35	39½	19	35	calm	ne.	ne.	.04	.03	
6.	29.924	29.740	29.40	29.73	29.97	29.85	29.85	29.97	29.85	29.85	60	32.5	40	20	32	35	calm	nw.	nw.			
7.	30.189	30.091	29.76	30.10	30.12	30.10	30.00	30.10	30.10	30.00	44	26	34	41	25	40	calm	n.	n.			
8.	30.260	30.195	29.93	30.00	29.73	29.62	29.62	29.79	29.79	29.62	49	35	45	41½	30	39	calm	sw.	sw.	.05	0.75	
9.	30.021	29.949	29.50	29.47	29.73	29.22	29.50	29.47	29.22	29.50	58	34	37	40	40	41	w.	sw.	sw.	.07	.18	
10.	29.707	29.571	29.30	29.60	29.59	29.30	29.30	29.60	29.50	29.30	44	31	42	47½	35	42	calm	sw.	sw.	.69	.09	
11.	29.626	29.468	29.00	29.12	29.13	28.88	28.82	29.12	28.88	28.82	53	35	48.5	46	38½	40	w.	sw.	sw.	.20	.07	
12.	29.730	29.483	28.98	29.17	29.68	29.18	29.63	29.17	29.18	29.63	47	32	37	42½	30½	35	w.	sw.	sw.	.09	.11	
13.	29.954	29.929	29.55	29.80	29.84	29.79	29.75	29.79	29.75	29.75	47	32	37	42½	30½	35	w.	sw.	sw.	.07	.23	
14.	29.892	29.592	29.50	29.70	29.50	29.70	29.70	29.50	29.70	29.70	49	39	47	43	33	38	calm	sw.	sw.	.48	.06	
15.	29.457	29.447	29.02	29.30	29.45	29.70	29.88	29.30	29.45	29.70	53	30	41.5	39	33½	38	w.	sw.	e.	.04	.33	
16.	29.667	29.460	29.16	29.65	29.93	29.82	30.15	29.65	29.82	30.15	53	38	38	37	30	39	calm	sw.	e.			
17.	29.972	29.879	29.69	30.09	30.16	30.20	30.18	30.16	30.20	30.18	44	35	38	38	29	40	e.	ne.	sw.			
18.	30.030	29.985	29.67	30.00	30.05	30.15	30.10	30.15	30.10	30.15	46	35	38	48	24½	38	calm	sw.	sw.			
19.	30.039	29.897	29.65	29.98	29.70	29.90	29.53	29.90	29.90	29.53	51	36	40	47	30½	41	calm	nw.	nw.	.04	.08	
20.	29.811	29.450	29.02	29.88	29.84	29.75	29.89	29.84	29.75	29.89	48	23	42	44½	39	37½	w.	nw.	nw.	.12		
21.	30.017	29.921	29.64	29.40	29.60	29.58	29.58	29.60	29.58	29.58	50	31	36	44	24	41	calm	sw.	sw.			
22.	29.739	29.503	29.25	29.39	29.40	29.35	29.48	29.39	29.40	29.35	47	42	41	49	...	45	calm	sw.	sw.	.05	.22	
23.	29.570	29.513	29.04	29.38	29.40	29.55	29.40	29.40	29.55	29.40	52	26	42	49	35	41	w.	sw.	sw.	.04	.03	
24.	29.655	29.513	28.99	29.09	29.33	28.95	29.15	29.09	29.33	28.95	48	35	39	45½	35½	41	w.	sw.	sw.	.03	.03	
25.	29.644	29.573	29.19	29.32	29.10	29.20	29.20	29.10	29.20	29.20	56	43	44	47	36½	44	calm	sw.	sw.	.06	.20	
26.	29.805	29.617	29.40	29.52	29.55	29.50	29.49	29.55	29.50	29.49	60	46	47	53	36½	45	calm	sw.	sw.	.10		
27.	30.032	29.851	29.37	29.61	29.61	29.60	29.90	29.61	29.60	29.90	60	41	52	58	44	46	calm	sw.	sw.			
28.	30.395	30.269	29.83	30.19	30.30	30.05	30.10	30.30	30.05	30.10	60	29	46.5	53½	30½	47	n.	calm	sw.			
29.	30.505	30.411	30.00	30.37	30.40	30.38	30.38	30.37	30.40	30.38	63	37	46	52	40	51	e.	calm	sw.			
30.	30.373	30.283	29.98	30.33	30.30	30.39	30.35	30.33	30.30	30.35	57	40	40	51½	30½	45	ne.	calm	sw.			
31.	30.235	30.159	29.88	30.20	30.07	30.32	30.16	30.20	30.32	30.16	60	38	41.5	59	36½	43	e.	calm	sw.			
Mean.	29.867	29.739	29.38	29.622	29.679	29.609	29.652	29.622	29.609	29.652	51.06	34.84	40.4	45.3	32.3	40.45	2.44	1.89	2.52	3.68		